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# TOOLKIT

**Tools and methods for  
inclusive youth work**



**FRYSHUSET**

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# PROLOGUE



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# Introduction

Our project has successfully equipped youth workers with practical tools to promote the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in various community activities. This initiative, made possible by the Erasmus+ program, focused on knowledge exchange, shared experiences, and the development of an accessible online toolbox. Our aim was to enhance youth inclusion, reduce inequality, and foster active citizenship within both Czech and Swedish communities.

Thanks to the support of Erasmus+, we were able to provide youth workers with opportunities for professional development through study visits to key organizations in both countries. In the Czech Republic, youth workers visited SKP-CENTRUM and DaR, and in Sweden, they explored successful inclusion strategies at Fryshuset. These exchanges allowed participants to gain firsthand experience with effective methods of youth engagement, which were then combined into this digital toolbox that will be shared with a wider audience.

The project also placed significant emphasis on the development and evaluation of an educational tool for youth workers, offering practical methods for working with marginalized youth in inclusive ways. Feedback from participants allowed us to refine and adapt the tool, ensuring it meets the real needs of youth workers in both the Czech and Swedish contexts.

To sum up, the Erasmus+ opportunity was key to enhancing the quality of youth work, recognizing the vital role of professional youth workers, and increasing civic engagement among young people. With a focus on equal access to non-formal education and recreation, the project has contributed to creating a more inclusive society where youth from all backgrounds can thrive.

The project concluded with a hybrid dissemination conference, where we shared the outcomes and resources with a wider community of youth workers, stakeholders, and policymakers. This final event was another example of how Erasmus+ supports the sharing of knowledge and resources on a broader scale, ensuring the sustainability and impact of the project long beyond its completion.

## ***Introduction***

In this handbook, we present various methods and tools that can be used in youth work. These methods are designed to help young people develop, feel a sense of belonging, and manage life's challenges. Each section of the handbook will provide an in-depth description of the tool, its purpose, target audience, and practical applications.

The description of each tool will be divided in two parts "What is it?", and "How to use it".

### ***What is it?***

A tool or method in the context of youth work is a structured approach or technique used to engage and support young people. These methods aim to foster personal development, well-being, and resilience among youth. They often include interactive activities, guided discussions, and reflective practices that are tailored to the needs and interests of young people.

In this handbook, we present an overview of some tools or methods. Here, we answer questions such as what the tool is the goals and outcomes that can be achieved with each tool or method. We identify which target groups can benefit from each tool or method and specific needs each method is best suited for.

### ***How to use it / How to apply it***

Here, we provide concrete examples and some instructions on how each tool or method can be applied in practice. We describe how to create a safe environment, ask relevant questions, and follow up with practical actions.

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# 1 // // Johari Window

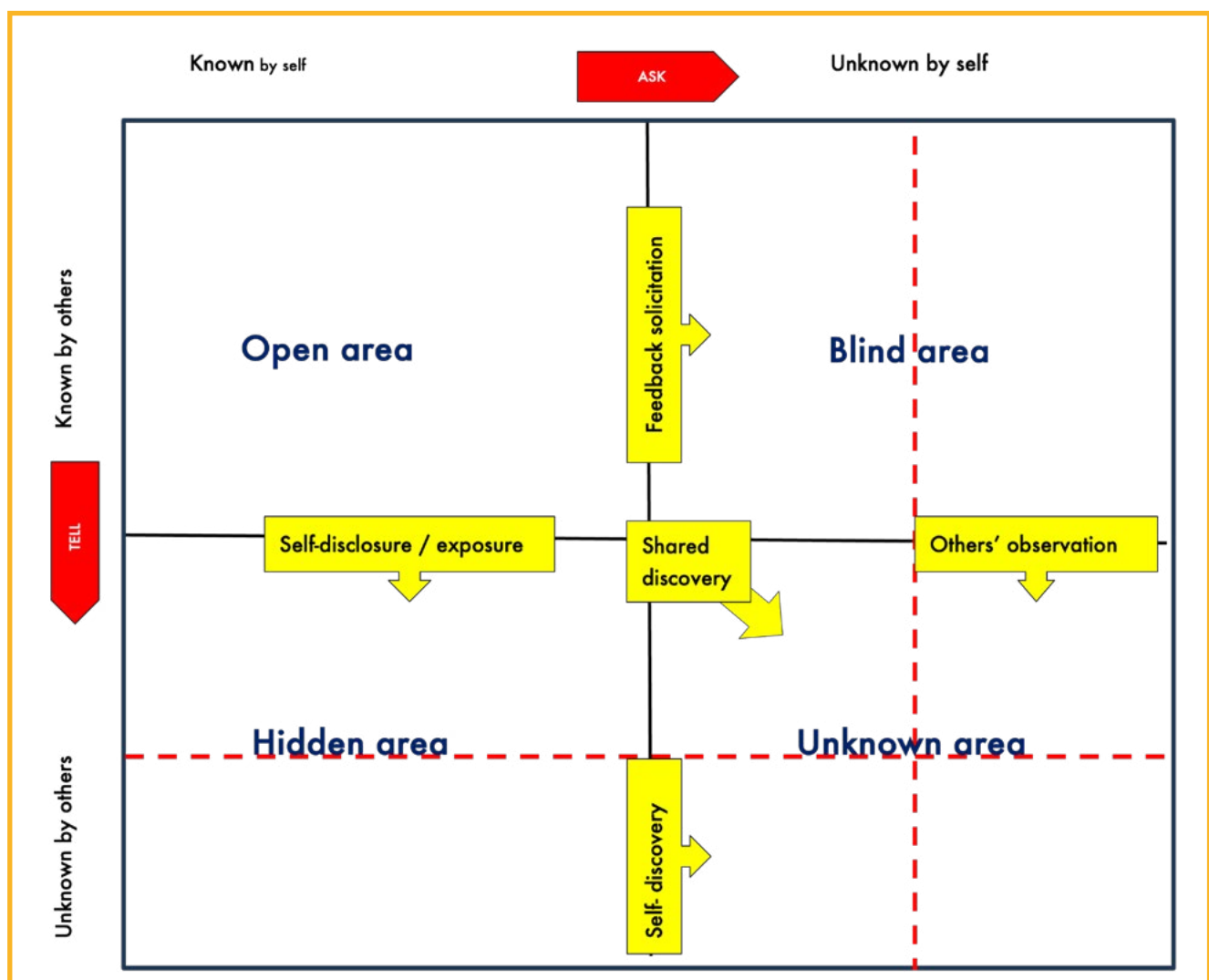
## Enhancing Self-Awareness and Mutual Trust

The aim of the tool is to support groups in building mutual trust among members and guiding decision-making processes based on that trust.

### What is it?

The Johari window model is used to enhance an individual's perception of others. This model is based on two ideas: trust can be acquired by revealing information about yourself to others and learning from their feedback. Each person is represented by the Johari model through four quadrants or window panes. Each of the four window panes signifies personal information, feelings, motivation, and whether that information is known or unknown to oneself or others.

We cannot fully grasp our own personality, but we can be aware of what part of our personality we reveal to the outside world. The Johari window (named after its inventors Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham) is one of the most interesting models for describing human interaction. A four-paned 'window' divides personal awareness into four different types.



### *The four quadrants:*

- ▶ **Open area:** This quadrant describes characteristics and experiences that we are aware of ourselves and that we like to tell others about.
- ▶ **Hidden area:** This 'hidden' quadrant describes things that we know about ourselves but choose not to reveal to others. It decreases in size the more we build up a trusting relationship with others.
- ▶ **Blind area:** There are things that we do not know about ourselves but that others can see clearly. And there are things that we think we are expressing clearly, but which others interpret completely differently. Feedback in this quadrant can be enlightening but also hurtful.
- ▶ **Unknown area:** There are aspects of ourselves that are hidden from ourselves as well as others. We are more complex and multifaceted than we think. From time to time something unknown rises to the surface from our unconscious - for example, in a dream.

## **How to use it: Self-Discovery Exercise Using the Johari Window**

### *Step 1: Choose Adjectives*

Choose a list of adjectives (e.g., fun, reliable, introverted) that you think best describe you. Reflect on why you picked each adjective and consider how these traits affect your interactions with others and your daily life.

### *Step 2: Categorize into Quadrants*

Using the Johari Window model, categorize the selected adjectives into the four quadrants:

- ▶ **Open Area:** Characteristics and experiences you are aware of and share with others.
- ▶ **Hidden Area:** Traits you know about yourself but choose not to reveal to others.
- ▶ **Blind Area:** Aspects you believe are true about yourself but might be perceived differently by others.
- ▶ **Unknown Area:** Qualities unknown to both yourself and others, which might surface occasionally.

### *Step 3: Seek Feedback*

Ask friends, colleagues, or family members to choose adjectives that they think describe you. Record their chosen adjectives and add them to the appropriate quadrants in your Johari Window.

### *Step 4: Reflect and Analyze*

Compare your self-selected adjectives with those chosen by others. Reflect on the following:

- ▶ Are there any surprises in the Blind Area?
- ▶ What aspects of yourself are revealed in the Hidden Area?
- ▶ Did any Unknown qualities emerge during this exercise?



## Step 5: Action and Growth

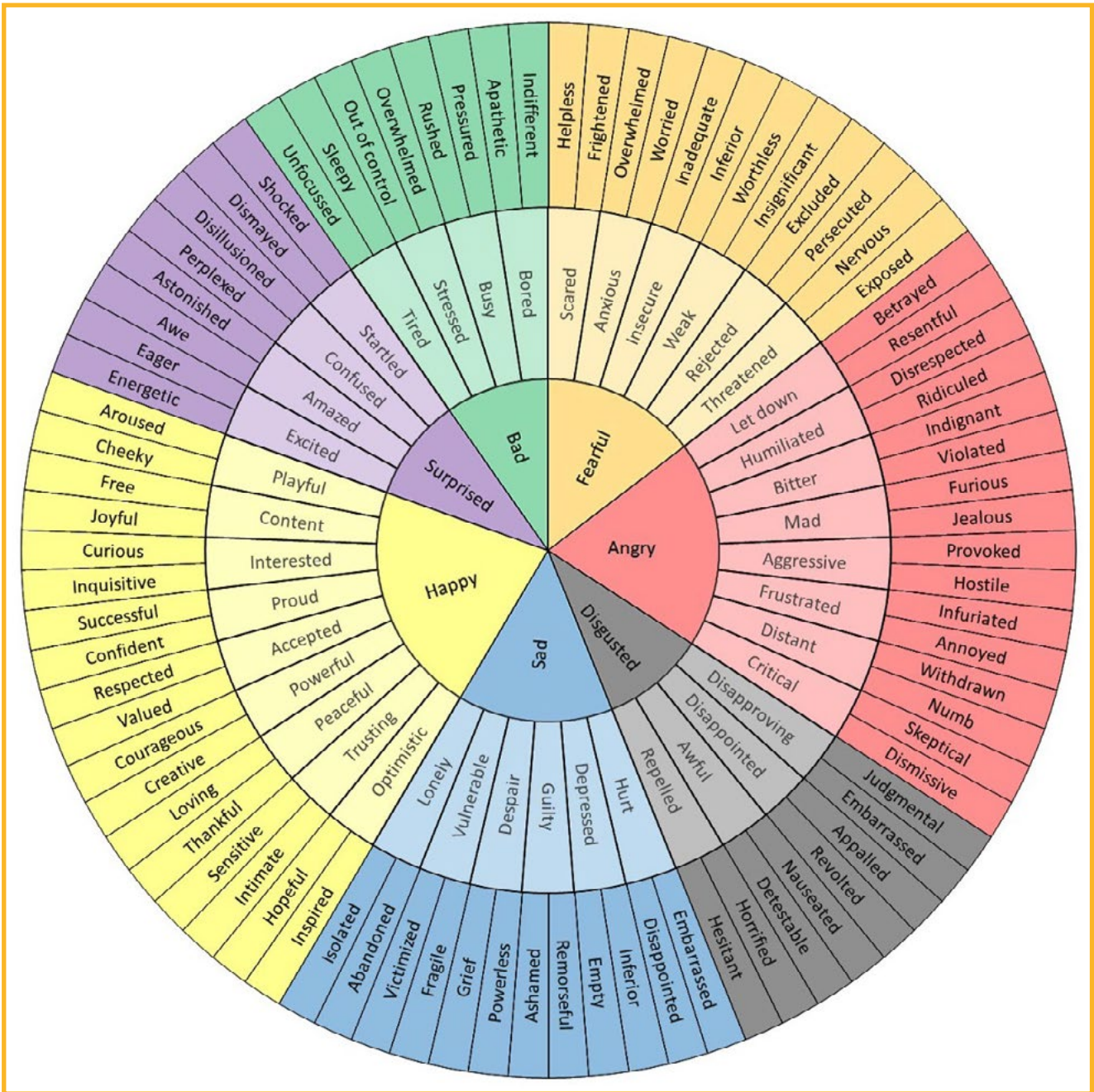
Based on the insights gained from your Johari Window, consider the following actions:

- ▶ Share more about yourself to reduce the Hidden Area.
- ▶ Seek constructive feedback to gain a better understanding of your Blind Area.
- ▶ Reflect on any Unknown traits that surfaced and consider how they might influence your behavior.

This exercise helps increase self-awareness and uncovers hidden strengths or areas for personal growth. It's a valuable tool for improving interactions with others and fostering personal development.

# 2/// The Wheel of Feelings

## A Practical Guide for Youth Workers



### What is it?

The Wheel of Feelings is a tool designed to help individuals identify and articulate their emotions. It categorizes feelings into core emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, and fear, and breaks them down into more specific feelings. This allows for a deeper understanding of emotional states and helps people move beyond vague terms like “good” or “bad” to gain clarity about what they are truly experiencing.

## **How to use it**

The Wheel of Feelings can be used in various contexts when working with young people. At the beginning of meetings or sessions, you can use the wheel to help individuals identify and share their current emotional states. This not only fosters self-awareness but also promotes a supportive and open environment. By regularly incorporating this tool, you can create a space where young people feel comfortable expressing their emotions without judgment.

To help individuals articulate their emotions in a warm and caring manner, consider asking the following questions:

- ▶ “How are you feeling today? Can you describe your emotions?”
- ▶ “Would you like to share or put words to these feelings? What’s been going on?”
- ▶ “We’d love to hear more about how you’re doing.”

In addition to using the Wheel of Feelings, incorporating fun and creative check-in questions can help young people connect with their emotions in a more playful and engaging manner. Here are some examples:

- ▶ “What color do you feel represents your mood today?”
- ▶ “If your emotions were a song, which one would it be and why?”
- ▶ “Can you think of a movie or book character that you feel resembles your current state?”
- ▶ “If you had to describe your current mood in one word, what would that word be?”
- ▶ “What has been the best moment of your day so far?”
- ▶ “If you were an animal today, which one would you be and why?”
- ▶ “If you were a fruit, which one would best represent you right now?”
- ▶ “Describe your current mood using a weather metaphor.”

These imaginative questions help break the ice and invite participants to express themselves freely, providing a gentle way to ease into the session while fostering connection.

It is important to create an environment where participation is encouraged but not forced. If young people do not want to answer, respect their choice and allow them to pass. Clarify that it is acceptable to choose not to share if they do not feel comfortable. Over time, as trust builds within the group, individuals may feel more inclined to open up.

## **Tips for being more inclusive**

- ▶ **Use Diverse Examples:** Ensure that your examples and questions are inclusive and relatable for all participants, considering their diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- ▶ **Be Mindful of Language:** Use language that is simple and accessible, avoiding jargon or complex terms that might make some participants feel left out.

- ④ Create a Safe Space: Emphasize confidentiality and a no-judgment policy to help young people feel safe and respected.
- ④ Encourage Empathy: Foster an environment where participants listen to and support each other, promoting empathy and understanding.

By following these guidelines, youth workers can effectively use the Wheel of Feelings to make a positive and meaningful impact on the young people they work with.

# 3/// Credible Messengers

## *Approaches and method for engaging target groups*

### **What is it?**

Credible Messengers are trusted individuals from the target group who take on roles within an organization. These messengers are integral to the organization's outreach strategy, serving as communicators between the organization and specific communities. Actively involved in various projects and initiatives, they help bridge the gap by sharing information and fostering understanding among their peers. This approach is particularly effective in engaging young people from underrepresented and harder-to-reach areas, including those facing complex personal or social challenges. By initiating dialogue, disseminating information, and gaining insights into the perspectives and needs of the target group, Credible Messengers enhance the organization's outreach and effectiveness.

### **How to apply it**

Identifying credible messengers involves selecting individuals who are deeply trusted within their communities and have a genuine understanding of the challenges faced by their peers. These individuals often emerge organically from within the target group and are recognized for their leadership qualities, empathy, and communication skills. Organizations can also engage with community leaders, educators, and local organizations to identify potential messengers.

However, this approach can present several challenges. There is a risk that credible messengers may inadvertently reinforce existing biases or perpetuate misinformation if they lack adequate training and support. Additionally, the pressure of representing their community and the organization can be overwhelming for some messengers, potentially leading to burnout or disengagement. Conflicts of interest may also arise if messengers prioritize personal relationships over the broader goals of the organization.

### **Preventing the most common issues**

- ▶ Provide comprehensive training and ongoing support for credible messengers.
- ▶ Equip them with essential skills such as conflict resolution, public speaking, and ethical decision-making.
- ▶ Conduct regular check-ins and implement mentorship programs to address personal or professional challenges.
- ▶ Establish clear guidelines and expectations to ensure messengers remain aligned with the organization's mission.
- ▶ Maintain their authenticity and connection with the community.

By implementing these strategies, organizations can harness the power of credible messengers while minimizing potential drawbacks.

# 4/// Solution focused approach

## *Fostering change in the lives of young people*

### **What is it?**

We want to support the young people in believing that they have the ability to influence their future and be in charge of positive change in their life.

Results of our survey of young people needs show us that 38% respondents either don't know how or don't believe they can influence their future or environment. Also our experience as social workers tells us that young client of social services are even more vulnerable in regard of self-esteem and self-efficacy. They lack support in their families of origin and within their community as well as role models in their natural environment. As social workers, educators and youth workers, we aim to support young people in developing skills and build resilience to live fulfilled and meaningful life.

### **History of SFBT, applications in social work and youth work**

The Solution-Focused Approach (SFA) emerged in the 1980s as a response to traditional problem-focused therapeutic practices. It was developed by psychotherapists Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee, USA. Their work focused on understanding client strengths and resources, rather than delving into the past or exploring the root causes of issues. The approach gained popularity due to its effectiveness, particularly in brief therapy settings. It has been adapted not only for individuals and families but also in various fields, including social work, youth work, education, and organizational development.

In social work and youth work, the Solution-Focused Approach is particularly useful for fostering resilience and empowerment.

There are several applications of SFA in youth work, such as Kids' Skills (Ben Furman) and Mission Possible.

**Kids' Skills** is a fun, engaging method that combines play with the solution-focused approach. It helps children develop new skills by focusing on their existing strengths. Here's how it works:

- ▶ **Skill Identification:** Young people identify the skills they want to learn or improve.
- ▶ **Skill Building:** Using a simple, game-like format, youth workers help them practice these skills step-by-step.
- ▶ **Celebrating Success:** As young people gain new skills, they celebrate their progress, which boosts their confidence and encourages further growth.

**Mission Possible** is another exciting activity suitable for older kids and adolescents that incorporates the solution-focused approach. In this framework, young people create a “mission” where they identify a challenge they want to overcome or a goal they want to achieve. Here’s the process:

- ▶ **Mission Setting:** Participants define their personal missions, which clarify what they want to achieve.
- ▶ **Solution Exploration:** Through discussions and brainstorming, they explore potential solutions and resources.
- ▶ **Action Plan:** Young people develop a clear action plan with steps they can take to accomplish their mission.
- ▶ **Feedback and Reflection:** They reflect on their progress and adjust their plans as needed, learning to adapt and grow.

# Kids' Skills



1. Convert problems into skills the child can learn.



2. Talk with the child about what skill you want him to learn.



3. Help the child see the benefits of the skill, for others as well as for himself.



4. Let the child give a name to the skill.



5. Ask the child to choose a power animal that helps him learn the skill.



6. Help the child find supporters.



7. Ask the child's supporters to tell him why they are confident he will learn the skill.



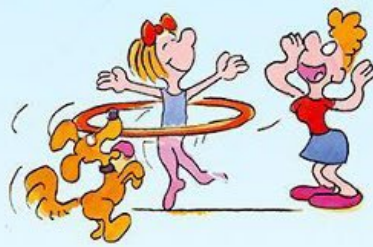
8. Make a plan with the child about how to celebrate when he has learned the skill.



9. Ask the child to demonstrate to you how he will behave when he has learned the skill.



10. Help the child tell people what skill he is going to learn.



11. Let the child practice the skill by giving him opportunities to show how skillful he already is.



12. Let the child tell you how he wants to be reminded if he forgets the skill.



13. When it is time to celebrate, ask the child to thank all the supporters for their help.



14. Give the child an opportunity to teach the skill to other children.



15. Discuss with the child the next skill he will learn.



## **How to use it: general infos**

### **Basic principles:**

- ▶ **Focus on Solutions, Not Problems:** The primary aim is to identify and amplify solutions rather than diagnosing problems. Workers encourage clients to envision a preferred future.
- ▶ **Client as Expert:** Clients are viewed as experts in their own lives. Workers collaborate with clients to discover their strengths, resources, and previous successes.
- ▶ **Small Changes Can Lead to Big Differences:** The approach emphasizes the belief that small, incremental changes can lead to significant transformations in behavior and perspective.
- ▶ **Goal Orientation:** Clear, achievable goals are established early in the process. Workers assist clients in defining what they want to achieve rather than what they want to avoid.
- ▶ **Use of Language:** The language is positive and focused on what clients want, using dialogue that fosters hope and forward thinking.

### **Tools:**

- ▶ **The Miracle Question:** This technique encourages clients to articulate their ideal outcome and what changes they would notice if their problem were resolved.
- ▶ **Scaling Questions:** Clients are asked to rate their current situation or feelings on a scale (often 1-10), which helps them assess progress and identify what needs to change to reach their desired state.
- ▶ **Exception-Finding Questions:** These questions help clients identify times when the problem was less severe or absent, highlighting existing strengths and resources.
- ▶ **Compliments and Affirmations:** Workers regularly highlight clients' strengths and successes to build confidence and reinforce positive behaviors.

## **How to use it: 3 steps to build the relationship**

### **Step 1: Small talk**

At the first meeting with the child or adolescent, it is useful to start conversation with their strengths, skills and passions, rather than diving deep in their troubles and weaknesses.

There are several easy tools that can be used, such as "hands" or "sun". We encourage the child to outline their hand. Then he/she can write one thing he/she likes to do to each finger on one hand and one thing he/she is good at to each finger on the other hand. Other option is to ask the child to draw a sun. Then we take the picture and ask him/her to tell us as many things he/she likes and he/she is good at as many sunrays are there in the picture. We encourage the child in bringing as many things as possible and write it down for them.

Mostly, it will seem difficult at first, but we try to encourage the child and may also ask questions like "What would your friends/parents/teachers say you are good at"?

We can further ask “What do you specifically like on the thing you like?” (e.g. passion for music, art or cooking can mean many different things for different people – it can be the creativity or freedom of it, or the structure and rules on the other hand).

These simple tools help us to connect with the child and build trust within our relationship. Many children are used to be asked about their problems and failures quite a lot. This different approach may be surprising to them at first. It sets a playful and supportive tone to our future cooperation. We can learn a lot about kids’ and young people’s strengths and passion and we can build on in later on. What we like and what we are good at motivates us all!

## **Step 2: Mapping strengths, skills and past achievements (looking for positive exceptions)**

Mapping strengths, skills, and past achievements is an essential tool for youth workers who want to adopt a solution-focused approach. This method emphasizes the capabilities and successes of young people, helping them build confidence and motivation as they work towards their goals. It also fosters the working alliance and safe relationship among the youth worker and the “client”.

### **1. Create a Safe and Supportive Environment**

- ▶ Begin by building rapport with the youth. Ensure they feel safe and understood.
- ▶ Use open-ended questions that encourage them to share their experiences.

### **2. Identify Strengths**

- ▶ Ask questions such as:
  - ▶ “What do you feel you are really good at?”
  - ▶ “What do your friends or family say are your strengths?”
- ▶ Take note of both personal qualities (like resilience, creativity) and practical skills (like communication or teamwork).

### **3. Recognize Existing Skills**

- ▶ Engage in conversations about their hobbies, academic subjects, or any extracurricular activities.
- ▶ Questions to consider:
  - ▶ “What activities do you enjoy doing the most?”
  - ▶ “What skills have you developed through these activities?”

### **4. Celebrate Past Achievements**

- ▶ Help the youth reflect on their past successes, no matter how small.

- ▶ Use prompts like:
  - ▶ “Can you tell me about a time you felt proud of something you accomplished?”
  - ▶ “What challenges have you overcome, and what did you learn from those experiences?”
- ▶ Document these achievements to create a visual map that they can see and refer back to.
- ▶ Discuss how their existing strengths and skills can help them reach their future aspirations.
- ▶ Questions to guide this discussion:
  - ▶ “How can what you’ve achieved in the past help you with what you want to do next?”
  - ▶ “What steps could you take to use your strengths to solve current challenges?”

## 6. Utilize the Map

- ▶ Create a visual representation (e.g., a mind map or chart) that includes their strengths, skills, and achievements.
- ▶ Encourage them to keep this map visible as a reminder of their capabilities.

Using this mapping technique reinforces the solution-focused approach by highlighting what youth already bring to the table. By recognizing their strengths, existing skills, and past achievements, young people can cultivate a sense of hope and agency in their lives. As you support them, remember to celebrate every small victory and encourage them to envision their future, empowering them to pursue their goals with confidence.

## Step 3: Building future

### Dream (“miracle question”)

The so-called Miracle Question is a powerful tool used in a solution-focused approach that encourages clients—especially youth—to envision a better future without their current problems. This technique helps clients articulate their goals, fostering motivation and hope. It allows young individuals to explore their strengths and resources by focusing on what they want rather than what they want to avoid.

### How the Miracle Question Works

The Miracle Question typically goes like this:

“Imagine that tonight, while you sleep, a miracle happens. When you wake up in the morning, you find that the problems you’ve been experiencing are completely solved. What would be different? What would you notice first? How would you feel? What would you be doing differently?”

### **Purpose of the Miracle Question**

- ▶ Inspire Vision: It prompts clients to think positively about their future, encouraging them to visualize the changes they want to see.
- ▶ Identify Goals: By exploring the details of their “miracle,” clients can pinpoint specific goals and aspirations.
- ▶ Recognize Resources: Clients often identify their strengths and past successes, empowering them to utilize these in achieving their goals.
- ▶ Shift Perspective: It encourages a shift from problem-focused thinking to solution-oriented thinking, fostering resilience and adaptability.

### **How to Use the Miracle Question**

- ▶ **1. Create a Safe Space:** Ensure the environment is comfortable and supportive, allowing the client to express themselves freely.
- ▶ **2. Ask the Miracle Question:** Pose the question in a relaxed manner, encouraging the client to take their time in imagining their ideal scenario.
- ▶ **3. Listen Actively:** Pay close attention to their responses, validating their feelings and ideas. Follow-up with open-ended questions like:
  - ▶ “What else would you notice?”
  - ▶ “Who would be there with you?”
  - ▶ “What steps do you think you could take to move toward this vision?”
- ▶ **4. Explore Practical Steps:** Help the client brainstorm small, tangible steps they can take towards achieving their “miracle,” reinforcing their agency and capability.
- ▶ **5. Regular Check-ins:** Revisit the vision during follow-up sessions, celebrating progress and adjusting goals when necessary.

By using the Miracle Question, youth workers not only help their clients articulate their hopes and dreams but also empower them to take actionable steps towards a brighter future. This technique fosters a sense of control and resilience, essential for youth navigating challenges.

# 5/// Sense of Coherence (SOC)

## Aaron Antonovsky's psychological model

### What is it?

Sense of Coherence (SOC) is a concept developed by medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky. It is a psychological model that emphasizes the significance of viewing life as manageable, meaningful, and comprehensible, even in the face of adversity. Antonovsky identified a strong Sense of Coherence as a crucial factor in how individuals cope with stress, confront challenges, and sustain mental well-being.

Antonovsky's approach is rooted in the salutogenic perspective, which focuses on factors that support human health and well-being, rather than on factors that cause disease. The term "salutogenesis" means "the origin of health," and this perspective emphasizes the importance of exploring and understanding what keeps people healthy, even in the presence of stressors.

### SOC is built on three core components:

- ▶ **Comprehensibility** – The feeling that life's challenges and experiences are understandable and fit into a larger, coherent picture. When faced with difficulties, we are able to make sense of them and integrate them into our overall worldview.
- ▶ **Manageability** – The belief that we have the skills, resources, and support needed to handle life's demands. This component centers on confidence in our ability to cope and effectively navigate difficult situations.
- ▶ **Meaningfulness** – The sense that life has purpose and that the struggles we encounter are worthwhile. It encourages us to see value and motivation in our efforts, even when facing adversity.

Together, these elements create a strong Sense of Coherence, which helps individuals develop resilience and maintain positive mental health. People with a high Sense of Coherence are more likely to experience positive outcomes, as they are better equipped to manage stress, stay motivated, and find meaning in their experiences.

### How to use it

#### Step 1: Build Trust and Rapport

- ▶ Establish a safe and supportive environment where young people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ Develop a relationship based on trust and respect, showing genuine interest and empathy.

### **Step 2: Assess Comprehensibility**

- ▶ Help young people understand their experiences by encouraging them to talk about their challenges and feelings.
- ▶ Provide clear explanations and context to help them make sense of their situations.
- ▶ Use storytelling or relatable examples to illustrate complex concepts.

### **Step 3: Enhance Manageability**

- ▶ Identify the skills, resources, and support systems available to the young person.
- ▶ Work together to develop coping strategies and action plans for dealing with specific challenges.
- ▶ Encourage them to set realistic and achievable goals, and celebrate small successes along the way.

### **Step 4: Foster Meaningfulness**

- ▶ Explore the young person's interests, passions, and values to help them find purpose and motivation.
- ▶ Encourage them to reflect on the significance of their experiences and how they contribute to their personal growth.
- ▶ Support them in identifying and pursuing activities that align with their sense of purpose.

### **Step 5: Regular Check-ins and Adjustments**

- ▶ Schedule regular follow-up sessions to revisit goals, celebrate progress, and make necessary adjustments.
- ▶ Continuously reinforce the young person's sense of agency and capability.
- ▶ Adapt your approach based on their evolving needs and circumstances.

### **Conclusion**

By integrating the principles of the Sense of Coherence model into your work with young people, you can help them build resilience, find meaning in their experiences, and develop the skills needed to navigate life's challenges. This step-by-step guide provides a framework for fostering a strong SOC, empowering young people to thrive in an ever-changing world.



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